



Future of Florida's Families Committee

**January 11, 2006
10:45 AM – 11:45 AM
12 House Office Building**

Action Packet

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT
Future of Florida's Families Committee
1/11/2006 10:45:00AM

Location: 12 HOB

Attendance:

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Excused</i>
Bill Galvano (Chair)	X		
Rafael Arza	X		
Aaron Bean	X		
Susan Bucher	X		
Mike Davis	X		
Richard Glorioso	X		
Susan Goldstein	X		
Will Kendrick	X		
Totals:	8	0	0

Committee meeting was reported out: Wednesday, January 11, 2006 11:58:43AM

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT
Future of Florida's Families Committee
1/11/2006 10:45:00AM

Location: 12 HOB

HB 351 : Community Residential Homes

☒ *Favorable With Committee Substitute*

	<i>Yea</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>No Vote</i>	<i>Absentee Yea</i>	<i>Absentee Nay</i>
Rafael Arza	X				
Aaron Bean	X				
Susan Bucher		X			
Mike Davis	X				
Richard Glorioso	X				
Susan Goldstein	X				
Will Kendrick		X			
Bill Galvano (Chair)	X				
Total Yeas: 6 Total Nays: 2					

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COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT
Future of Florida's Families Committee
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Location: 12 HOB

Summary:

Future of Florida's Families Committee

Wednesday January 11, 2006 10:45 am

HB 351 Favorable With Committee Substitute

Yeas: 6 Nays: 2

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HOUSE AMENDMENT FOR COUNCIL/COMMITTEE PURPOSES

Amendment No. 1

Bill No. **HB 351**

COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION

ADOPTED	___	(Y/N)
ADOPTED AS AMENDED	___	(Y/N)
ADOPTED W/O OBJECTION	✓	(Y/N)
FAILED TO ADOPT	___	(Y/N)
WITHDRAWN	___	(Y/N)
OTHER	___	

1 Council/Committee hearing bill: Future of Florida's Families
2 Representative(s) Lopez-Cantera offered the following:

3
4 **Amendment**

5 Remove line(s) 60 & 61, and insert:
6 occupancy, the sponsoring agency or the licensing entity must
7 notify or the department notifies the
8
9

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Identify the Policy Option/Recommendation:

Establish an Office of Child Abuse Prevention within the Executive Office of the Governor.

Explanation of Present Situation:

The Future of Florida's Families Committee conducted public hearings throughout the state to examine child abuse prevention. Now that the hearings are over, it is clear that the fundamental foundation for the delivery of services by Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the other involved state agencies regarding **Abuse Prevention** is flawed. The result of this flaw has created a tangled maze of services that is not only un-navigable by the providers but also the recipients of services. This maze has created confusion among communities as to what services are being offered, how to access these services, while also creating inefficiency and waste.

Long term **Abuse Prevention** can save the state millions if not billions of dollars, but it is not feasible to pour more money into a system in which the foundation to succeed does not exist. The Legislature needs to address the delivery system first before it moves forward. Addressing "prevention" is an issue that must have long-range goals.

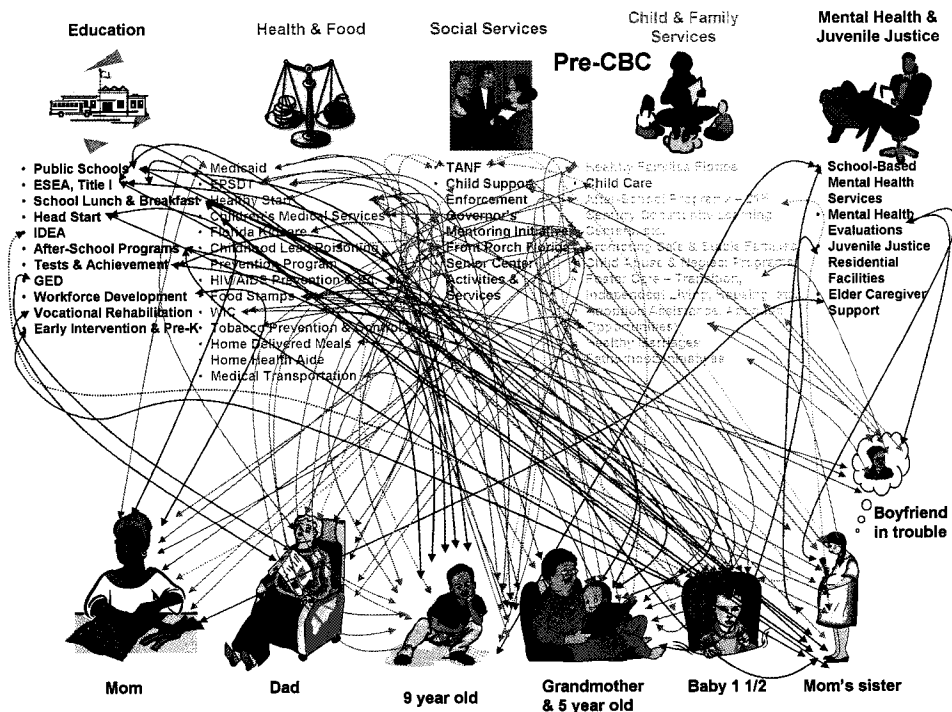
Before the state can fiscally increase prevention efforts, a centralized statewide integrated service network needs to be created – similar to the Office of Drug Control housed in the Executive Office of the Governor. The purpose of this office would be to continue to address the prevention needs of this state but also to centralize a community network throughout the state to increase communication, to more efficiently deliver services, while providing easy access to the citizens of the State of Florida to those services. By bringing together all the programs in the state it should create an environment conducive to a more "Prevention Focused" state effort to better serve the children and families of Florida.

Child Abuse, Neglect and Maltreatment cost the state millions of dollars each year, yet a centralized office to examine, oversee and implement prevention services of abuse has yet to be put into place. Without an organized effort, prevention will continue to fall through the cracks as history has already shown. In 2002, Florida was among only three other states and the District of Columbia in having the highest child maltreatment rate. During the same year, 142,547 investigations of abuse or neglect, involving 254,856 children, were completed. Approximately one-half of the investigations were substantiated or indicated the presence of abuse or neglect. In FY 2003-04, there were reportedly 32.3 victims of maltreatment per 1,000 children in Florida. Of children abused in 2003, 8.8% were re-abused within six months.

Recognizing the importance of reducing maltreatment and the conditions that are likely to promote abuse, the Legislature mandated that the Department of Children and Families work with an interdisciplinary task force to develop a statewide plan for child abuse prevention. This statewide plan was released in July 2005. Having the benefit of the

findings and recommendations of the Task Force, along with the Future of Florida's Families Committee conduction of public hearings it is now time for the Legislature to move forward with a centralized Prevention Office as a part of a long term plan that focuses on Prevention.

Is this office just creating another layer of Government?



As shown above, the current system is fragmented and inefficient. Creating an Office of Child Abuse Prevention is simply untangling the fragmented web of services to bring a more efficient, streamlined and accessible array of service to the families of the state of Florida. That is, layers will be removed, communication networks will be developed, prevention management will increase, and accountability will be created. Oftentimes, families do not know where to turn and local communities struggle to even know what services are being offered. A centralized prevention office will lay the foundation for success in accessing prevention services for years to come.

The current system is a tangled maze of services:

- Programs that focus on primary and secondary prevention of child abuse are offered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and at least six other state agencies, including the: Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and

thousands of community organizations. This results in a tangled maze of services that providers and people trying to access the services must attempt to navigate.

- This uncoordinated system makes it unclear what services are being offered, how to access these services, duplication of services, and results in inefficiency and waste. An Office of Child Abuse Prevention would coordinate statewide prevention efforts and keep children out of the child welfare system.
- Coordination of services would improve delivery of child abuse prevention programs, decrease barriers between community providers, the family needing services while also connecting private providers into a system that would result in a more efficient use of taxpayer monies.

Creating an Office of Child Abuse Prevention is efficient government:

- The current system targets all levels of child abuse: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Prevention programs are located at all levels of government and in many different state agencies. In our current system the primary focus is on “tertiary prevention,” clinical services, for cases in which the child or family has experienced abuse. This is an appropriate focus because the children and their families need immediate help to deal with abuse.
- However, the “after the fact” approach will not prevent child abuse in Florida – it may only prevent a recurrence. Primary prevention programs must not be a secondary thought if Florida wants to decrease the incidence of child abuse.
- In the long run, prevention reduces harm to children and increases state efficiency.

The U.S Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect has stated that only a system of early intervention, grounded in the creation of caring communities, can provide an effective foundation for confronting child abuse. An Office of Child Abuse Prevention would oversee the complicated system of child abuse prevention. The Office would coordinate community and state services, make recommendations to the Legislature, and communicate best practices back to community providers.

Need for Change -- Why something must be done?

Florida’s population is growing significantly, which will increase the number of children and families in the state. The American Community Survey (ACS) has been developed by the Census Bureau to provide population estimates annually. The percent change in growth of children in the United States is a 1.51% increase over the last five years. However, the percent change in growth in children in Florida over the last five years is a 9.87% increase. Therefore, over the last five years the percent increase of children in Florida is over six times the increase in the U.S. Furthermore, the growth in children in Florida accounts for almost one third of the increased number of children in the U.S. Therefore, simply by an increase in numbers, the volume of potential cases of children and families that may enter the child welfare system should increase. This means that there will be more children and families potentially at risk or involved in child abuse and neglect than ever before in the State of Florida.

The Rationale for Prevention:

- No disease or social problem has ever been brought under control by providing after-the-fact treatment to the victims of the disease or problem.
- Preventive, proactive, before-the-fact interventions have, historically, been the only effective way to control or eliminate important diseases. Public health prevention programs to control smallpox and polio are prime examples.
- Prevention interventions are not only very effective they are remarkably cost effective – often costing only a small fraction of the expense of the treatment. Hence the phrase, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Prevention Framework:

Maximizing prevention opportunities may mean making difficult decisions about how organizations utilize their funding. Prevention services reduce cost in the long run and can provide families with services in a less stigmatized manner. The integration of the full range of family support services requires a re-conceptualization of the frame of mind as to which “prevention is applied.” According to the Center for Disease Control, the cost of not preventing child abuse and neglect in 2001, equates to \$94 billion a year nationally. These direct costs include the utilization of the health care system, mental health system, child welfare system, law enforcement, and the judicial system -- while the indirect cost include special education, mental health and health care, juvenile delinquency, lost productivity to Society, and adult criminality. Therefore, prevention should be looked at as a sound investment.

Prevention Office Focus:

- Public awareness and education for parents to be able to provide for the health, education, and positive development of their children.
- Community asset mapping and state-wide needs assessment.
- Focus on early identification through screening efforts.
- Outlined funding priorities
- Linkages between primary and specialized service providers (e.g., inter-agency agreements, cross training, open communication network).
- Development of State Wide Best Practices.
- Specified performance and Outcome measures.
- Accountability, continuous quality improvement, and state/local action plans.
- Authority over Prevention Services statewide.

What other states are doing?

Oklahoma:

In 1984, the Office of Child Abuse Prevention was created in the Oklahoma Child Abuse Prevention Act. Prior to 1984, the focus of child abuse and neglect was an “after the fact” intervention, preventing the recurrence of child abuse and neglect. The act declared

that the prevention of child abuse and neglect was a priority in Oklahoma. In accordance with the Act, the Office of Child Abuse Prevention was created and placed within the Oklahoma State Department of Health to emphasize the focus of prevention. The mission of the office is to promote the health and safety of children and families by reducing family violence and child abuse, including neglect, through public health education, multidisciplinary training of professionals, and funding of community- based family resource and support programs.

Model State Programs (may not be a comprehensive list)

- Kentucky has a Division of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services established in 1996. This office is now organized within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.
 - Website: <http://chfs.ky.gov/dhss/cadv/>
- California has an Office of Child Abuse Prevention organized under the California Department of Social Services since 1997.
 - Website: http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/ChildAbuse_188.htm
- Alaska has Child Abuse Regional Networks comprised of four non-profit organizations working to coordinate child abuse prevention in Alaska.
 - Website:
<http://www.ak.org/Page/index.cfm?fuseaction=view&pageid=10&GroupID=1>
- New Jersey has a Division of Child Abuse Prevention under the state Department of Human Services. The website is under construction.
 - Website: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cap/>

Fiscal Impact, if known:

The cost of establishing an Office of Child Abuse Prevention has not been determined.